

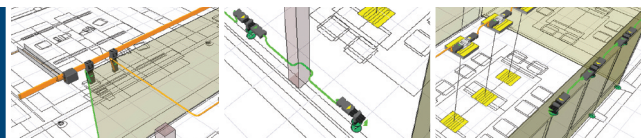
Tapping PLM to boost sales

Electrical connection manufacturer cuts customers' planning costs with a unique program based on Siemens PLM Software solutions and product configuration software

WIELAND ELECTRIC GMBH

Siemens PLM Software

www.siemens.com/plm



Business initiatives

New product development
Value chain synchronization

Business challenges

Reduce customers' planning time and costs
Provide additional services that enhance company's image

Keys to success

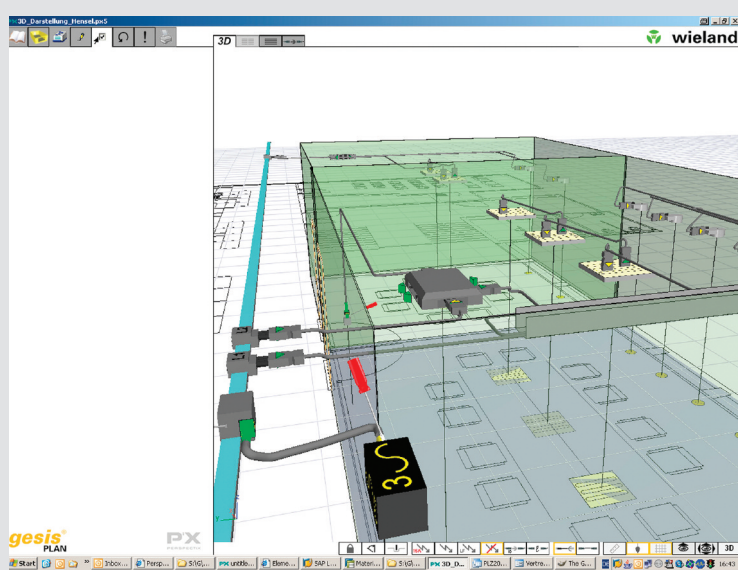
Expanding the use of PLM functionality to the sales process
Single source of product data; enterprise access
CAD, PLM, ERP and product configuration integration
Continuous data flow from design to product configuration

Results

Powerful selling tool that reduces planning time and costs
Common pricing and configuration mistakes avoided
Faster product design, quicker quotes
Increased sales

Making electrical installation even easier

Wieland Electric is one of the world's leading manufacturers of electrical connection technology. Its gesis product line, a "pluggable" installation system for electrical facility management, offers convincing advantages: pre-assembled cables and components can be installed much faster on site and subsequent work can be done inexpensively. The product line includes nearly 9,500 components to satisfy the needs of building owners, architects, system integrators and planners. According to Wieland Electric, using the gesis system can save up to 30 percent of the product cost and 70 percent of the labor expenses of an electrical installation.



Such a comprehensive system requires exact and detailed planning prior to installation. The planning team must choose the right components from the many cabling and connecting options within gesis. With the goal of making this process easier for its customers, Wieland initiated a software project in 2004. "We do indeed have good sales arguments for gesis," says Thomas Nieborg, application engineer at Wieland Electric. "But we knew that potential customers would be even more convinced if we could help them reduce their planning expenses."

gesisPLAN, as the software came to be called, is based on the P'X5 product configurator solution from Perspectix (a Siemens PLM Software authorized partner). In close cooperation with the software provider, several versions have been implemented so far, covering connectors, flat and round cables as well as an additional function for calculating the electrical load. "The integrated calculation of load is an additional free benefit for the customer that enhances security and professionalism," says Nieborg. After an external inspection authority approved the load calculation function, the software was eventually made available to all sales representatives. It is available in German, English, French, Spanish and Italian; Polish and Swedish are being prepared.

Solutions/Services

NX I-deas

Teamcenter

Perspectix P'X5

Client's primary business

Wieland Electric is a world leader in electrical connection technology.
www.wieland-electric.de

Client location

Bamberg and Gerach
Germany
and several international locations

"The greatest advantage of pluggable electric installation is convincingly described with 3D illustrations supported by parts lists that include assembly times."

Stephan Lauer
Vice President Sales, gesis
Wieland Electric

"The continuous data flow from engineering to product configuration accelerates product design and reduces time to market."

Detlef Racky
CAD Administrator
Wieland Electric

Partner

Perspectix AG
www.perspectix.com

"Working closely with Perspectix, we achieved our targets concerning usability and functionality," Nieborg says. "The software completely unlocks the benefits of a pluggable electrical installation."

Expanding the use of product data

The concept behind this approach is the integration of gesisPLAN into Wieland's primary IT systems: SAP R/3 and Productfinder business systems and NX I-deas® and Teamcenter® software for technical applications. All the master data for the configurator (rules and product descriptions) are taken from these applications and managed there as well. From the NX® solution, for example, more than 300 components were exported to VRML or JT™ format for visualization. Product details that are irrelevant to users but are competitive advantages to the company were removed. In lightweight JT format, the amount of data remains manageable even with plug boards carrying numerous clamps. This format lets users dynamically alter the level of detail via a zoom function.

Wieland has been using NX I-deas in product development since the mid 1990s. The software is used for designing, calculating the elasticity of plugs and for developing punching and forming tools. The Teamcenter enterprise knowledge management capability allows company-wide access to important development information. Teamcenter also provides input for P'X5: classifying attributes such as the possible current load of components. With Teamcenter, this information can be easily kept up-to-date.

"Siemens PLM Software does a good job integrating its own solutions, but it also provides openness for integrating other software components," says Detlef Racky, CAD administrator at Wieland Electric. "We feel very comfortable with this technology. The benefits of extended data usage have proven exceptional."

Benefits to the bottom line

The new planning tool is used at several stages of the sales process. The field staff mainly uses it for presenting the concept of pluggable installation techniques. They show a plan for a single room and compare costs and assembly time between the gesis approach and traditional methods. External planning agencies use the software to create detailed plans, which are then handed over to the development department at Wieland. Installation companies use gesisPLAN to detail and modify plans as well as to create offers. The development department at Wieland then elaborates cabling plans and prepares the development of distribution boxes. (These may be configured automatically in the future).

At all stages of this process, participants have easy, graphical access to the entire product catalogue. Complex cabling solutions can be built in 3D with floor plans imported from various CAD programs via the DXF/DWG format. The circuit, load and cabling can be calculated and checked automatically and unusual situations, such as current overloads or sharp voltage drops, are identified at once. An automatic pricing feature considers graduated rates and customer-related discounts. Background rules check all technical and commercial conditions and eliminate most common mistakes.

Siemens PLM Software solutions enable widespread access to product data, which has made miscommunication during the sales process a thing of the past. In addition, requests for quotes are responded to significantly faster. Automatic, highly precise price calculations and the ability to quickly generate documents containing descriptive images has increased Wieland Electric's sales.



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